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Agenda item 112 (e)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 13 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the decision of the Government of Brazil to present its candidature for the election to the Human Rights Council, to be held on 9 May 2006.

Please find enclosed a copy of the pledges demonstrating the commitments of Brazil in the field of human rights (see annex).

06-31527 (E) 210406

Annex to the note verbale dated 13 April 2006 from the Prime Minister of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Voluntary Pledges of Brazil for the Human Rights Council

With respect to the implementation and consolidation of the Human Rights Council, Brazil pledges to:

- Encourage the consideration by the Human Rights Council, as early as possible, of the draft International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and of the draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both issues that were ready for a decision in the extinct Commission on Human Rights, therefore enabling the adequate follow-up of the positive contributions of the Commission on Human Rights for the development of international human rights law;

- Contribute to the process of revision to be undertaken by the Council of the mandates and functions of the extinct Commission on Human Rights, with a view to strengthening its independence and transparency and rationalizing its functioning;

- Contribute to the development, by the Human Rights Council, of the functions pertaining to the promotion of human rights education and learning, as well as the performance of technical assistance services and capacity-building in the field of human rights, given their important preventive aspects, with a view to striking a balance between promotion and protection;

- Seek to strengthen the principle of universality in the monitoring of the human rights situation throughout the world. Brazil expects that the universal periodic review mechanism to be implemented by the Human Rights Council will also contribute towards this end, in consonance with the goal of the Brazilian proposal for the elaboration of global report on human rights, to the extent that the mechanism reinforces the principles of universality, indivisibility and non-selectivity with respect to the evaluation of the human rights situation in all parts of the world. Brazil will dedicate itself to ensuring that the universal periodic review mechanism is endowed with sufficient time and periodicity, as well as an adequate format for the efficient examination of the implementation of all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social, as well as to development, in all Member States of the United Nations, on the basis of cooperation and genuine dialogue.

With regard to the engagement with international protection mechanisms, Brazil pledges to:

- Maintain the standing invitation to all the special thematic procedures of the Council, and a frank and constructive dialogue with the mandate holders, with special attention to the follow-up to their recommendations;

- Maintain a broad and transparent cooperation with the treaty bodies, including through the timely presentation of the periodic reports and special attention to the recommendations provided by the Committees;

- Consider recognizing the competences of the Human Rights Committee and of the Committee against Torture to receive and examine individual complaints of violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and of

the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Brazil will encourage, in this regard, consideration by the national Parliament of the requests for authorization to adhere to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to formulate the declaration prescribed under article 22 of the Committee Against Torture;

- Support regularly the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

With regard to participation in the international human rights instruments, Brazil is already a part of practically all international human rights instruments. With a view to strengthening even more its participation in the human rights protection treaties, Brazil commits itself to:

- Consider adhering to the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, regarding the abolition of the death penalty, taking into consideration that the death penalty has not been applied in Brazil since the nineteenth century and is constitutionally proscribed. Brazil will encourage, in this regard, the consideration by the national Parliament of the request for authorization to adhere to the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

- Encourage the ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, currently under examination in the national Parliament.

With regard to the strengthening of the regional systems for the promotion and protection of human rights, Brazil pledges to:

- Contribute to the continuous strengthening of the Inter-American system for the promotion and protection of human rights, seeking to significantly advance the negotiations of a draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and of an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

- Regularly support the activities of the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights;

- Seek to strengthen the cooperation and political dialogue relating to human rights within MERCOSUR and its associated States, through the consolidation of the Meeting of High Authorities in the field of Human Rights and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of MERCOSUR and associated States;

- Encourage cooperation and political dialogue in the field of human rights within the South American community of nations.

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Please find enclosed a copy of the pledges demonstrating the commitments of Brazil in the field of human rights (see annex).

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 13 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Voluntary pledges of Brazil for the Human Rights Council

With respect to the implementation and consolidation of the Human Rights Council, Brazil pledges to:

- Encourage the consideration by the Human Rights Council, as early as possible, of the draft International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and of the draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both issues that were ready for a decision in the extinct Commission on Human Rights, therefore enabling the adequate follow-up of the positive contributions of the Commission on Human Rights for the development of international human rights law;

- Contribute to the process of revision to be undertaken by the Council of the mandates and functions of the extinct Commission on Human Rights, with a view to strengthening its independence and transparency and rationalizing its functioning;

- Contribute to the development, by the Human Rights Council, of the functions pertaining to the promotion of human rights education and learning, as well as the performance of technical assistance services and capacity-building in the field of human rights, given their important preventive aspects, with a view to striking a balance between promotion and protection;

- Seek to strengthen the principle of universality in the monitoring of the human rights situation throughout the world. Brazil expects that the universal periodic review mechanism to be implemented by the Human Rights Council will also contribute towards this end, in consonance with the goal of the Brazilian proposal for the elaboration of global report on human rights, to the extent that the mechanism reinforces the principles of universality, indivisibility and non-selectivity with respect to the evaluation of the human rights situation in all parts of the world. Brazil will dedicate itself to ensuring that the universal periodic review mechanism is endowed with sufficient time and periodicity, as well as an adequate format for the efficient examination of the implementation of all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social, as well as to development, in all Member States of the United Nations, on the basis of cooperation and genuine dialogue.

With regard to the engagement with international protection mechanisms, Brazil pledges to:

- Maintain the standing invitation to all the special thematic procedures of the Council, and a frank and constructive dialogue with the mandate holders, with special attention to the follow-up to their recommendations;

- Maintain a broad and transparent cooperation with the treaty bodies, including through the timely presentation of the periodic reports and special attention to the recommendations provided by the Committees;

- Consider recognizing the competences of the Human Rights Committee and of the Committee against Torture to receive and examine individual complaints of violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Brazil will encourage, in this regard, consideration by the national Parliament of the requests for authorization to adhere to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to formulate the declaration prescribed under article 22 of the Committee Against Torture;

- Support regularly the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

With regard to participation in the international human rights instruments, Brazil is already a part of practically all international human rights instruments. With a view to strengthening even more its participation in the human rights protection treaties, Brazil commits itself to:

- Consider adhering to the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, regarding the abolition of the death penalty, taking into consideration that the death penalty has not been applied in Brazil since the nineteenth century and is constitutionally proscribed. Brazil will encourage, in this regard, the consideration by the national Parliament of the request for authorization to adhere to the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

- Encourage the ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, currently under examination in the national Parliament.

With regard to the strengthening of the regional systems for the promotion and protection of human rights, Brazil pledges to:

- Contribute to the continuous strengthening of the Inter-American system for the promotion and protection of human rights, seeking to significantly advance the negotiations of a draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and of an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

- Regularly support the activities of the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights;

- Seek to strengthen the cooperation and political dialogue relating to human rights within MERCOSUR and its associated States, through the consolidation of the Meeting of High Authorities in the field of Human Rights and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of MERCOSUR and associated States;

- Encourage cooperation and political dialogue in the field of human rights within the South American community of nations.

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Note verbale dated 10 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, further to his note verbale dated 30 March 2006 announcing the decision of the Government of Greece to present its candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council, has the honour to communicate herewith an aide-memoire containing Greece's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

06-31688 (E) 280406

Annex to the note verbale dated 10 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Aide-memoire on the candidature of Greece to the Human Rights Council

Greece has always been a staunch supporter of the United Nations as guardian of the international legal order, and of the promotion and protection of human rights.

Greece has given priority to United Nations action in the field of human rights and has lent its active support for all components of the United Nations human rights machinery and is ready to play an active role in the United Nations system, particularly in the field of promotion and protection of human rights, by submitting its candidature to the Human Rights Council.

Greece supported from the outset the creation of an effective and efficient Human Rights Council, equipped with enhanced status, mandate, structures and membership necessary to give human rights the central role foreseen by the Charter and the reform Summit and to contribute to the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations human rights system. The Greek Government welcomes the establishment of the new Human Rights Council responsible for contributing effectively to the prevention of human rights violations, responding promptly to human rights emergencies and providing guidance and assistance to all countries to achieve the highest standards of human rights protection.

Greece is party to almost all major international instruments in the field of human rights and humanitarian law, such as:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1997) and its first and second Optional Protocols (1997)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1985)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1970)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1983) and its Optional Protocol (2002)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1988)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993) and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2003)
- Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2001)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1954)
- Four Geneva Conventions (1955), as well as the two Additional Protocols (1988, 1992, respectively)

- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002)
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1981) and its Second Protocol (2005)

Greece has consistently observed its reporting obligations.

It has supported the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has actively participated in the work of the United Nations human rights bodies. Greece has also supported the valuable work of the Council of Europe, as well as the role of the European Court of Human Rights, in defending and promoting human rights in Europe. Greece also actively works on the human dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The duty to respect, promote and protect human rights is enshrined in the Greek Constitution.

In 2001, a series of constitutional amendments were adopted in order to better harmonize the domestic legal order with Greece's international obligations in the field of human rights. A number of legislative and administrative measures have been adopted with a view to implement these amendments.

Such measures include:

- The launching of a comprehensive National Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings in cooperation with international organizations, other Governments and non-governmental organizations. In the field of human trafficking the Greek Government has recently signed a relevant convention within the Council of Europe and a bilateral agreement with Albania.
- The active role of Greece in the Human Security Network, of which it is a founding member.
- Furthermore, a number of important laws have been recently adopted to comply with relevant recommendations by United Nations human rights treaty bodies pertaining, inter alia, to the rights of the child, gender equality, prohibition of discrimination, especially on racial and ethnic grounds, protection of vulnerable groups such as migrants and AIDS patients and the integration of non-citizens into Greek society.
- The establishment of the Office of Greek Ombudsman, with a broad mandate related to human rights, including an assistant Ombudsman on the rights of the child.
- Equally important was the creation in 2000 of a National Commission on Human Rights to promote and monitor protection of human rights nationwide.
- In the same spirit, and due to a systematic effort in human rights education at all levels, in conformity with resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the judicial authorities, especially the highest Courts, often directly invoke and apply United Nations and other human rights instruments.

Greece will continue to strive for the strengthening of the universal respect for and promotion and protection of human rights. At the national level Greece commits itself to comply with its international human rights obligations, including those set out in the above-mentioned instruments.

Greece undertakes to ratify in the near future:

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (signed September 2000).
- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (signed December 2000).
- The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (signed 2000).
- The third additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem (signed December 2005).
- The Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court (signed September 2003).

Greece commits itself:

- To consider ratifying other relevant international instruments.
- To further cooperation among the public and private sector as well as civil society in the field of human rights.

In the United Nations, Greece, reiterating its long-standing commitments, pledges to:

- Fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council as set forth in General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006.
- Ensure adequate and effective responses to human rights crises when they occur, guided by universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, while promoting international dialogue and cooperation.
- Fully cooperate with the competent treaty bodies, submit national reports in a timely manner and take seriously into account the relevant concluding observations and recommendations, in its constant effort to further the promotion and protection of all human rights.
- Contribute in an open and constructive way to the discussions on the reform of the human rights treaty body system and to actively pursue the enhancement of the effectiveness and the rationalization of the treaty monitoring mechanisms.
- Maintain its standing invitation to the special procedures, which Greece considers to be one of the major achievements of the Commission on Human Rights, and ensure the unobstructed discharge of their duties, including the readiness to receive their visits whenever and wherever.
- Demonstrate its readiness to cooperate in the universal periodic review mechanism which will submit all States to scrutiny.
- Emphasize the Council's task to promote effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system.
- Continue supporting the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by considering raising its voluntary contribution ever further

and being active in other relevant United Nations funds, programmes and bodies.

- Continue to promote dialogue and cooperation in an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding as the primary means for protecting and strengthening human rights worldwide.

- Continue to give special emphasis to the strengthening of gender equality, the rights of women and the rights of the child.

- Continue to work for the universality and indivisibility of all human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural, including the right to development. Greece will give particular attention to the relation between human rights, poverty, sustainable development and environmental protection, equal opportunities access to essential natural resources (i.e., water), to food, to adequate shelter and sanitation services, to education, as instituted by the respective United Nations bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

- Continue to contribute actively to the early successful conclusion of the negotiations on an "International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities".

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Note verbale dated 8 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and has the honour to inform him that the Government of Azerbaijan has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for a seat allocated to the Eastern European Group at the first elections to be held on 9 May 2006.

Azerbaijan never had a chance to serve on the Commission on Human Rights despite the fact that for the first time ever, in 2005, it was elected to its membership for the period 2006-2008. Now, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Commission on Human Rights has been replaced by the Human Rights Council. Azerbaijan therefore ceased its tenure without even substantively commencing its membership. Given this fact, Azerbaijan will appreciate the opportunity to be elected to this important human rights body.

Azerbaijan is fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. My country attaches great importance to the enhanced cooperation with relevant international organizations and their respective bodies and institutions. In particular, the Government of Azerbaijan has been closely cooperating with the special procedures mandate holders and expresses its readiness to continue cooperation in the years to come.

Azerbaijan is also a party to all major international human rights instruments and has recognized the competence of the respective United Nations treaty monitoring bodies (see enclosure 1).

Also enclosed herewith is an aide-memoire (see annex) supporting the aspiration of Azerbaijan to serve on the Human Rights Council.

06-31694 (E) 280406

Annex to the note verbale dated 8 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire

Azerbaijan has decided to present its candidature for election to the United Nations Human Rights Council at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006 during the 60th session of the General Assembly.

Azerbaijan considers the protection and promotion of human rights to be a priority of its internal and foreign policy agenda. It assumes that security and peace, development and human rights are cornerstones for the contemporary international relations, while the rule of law, democracy and protection and promotion of human rights and main freedoms are key pillars for the national development.

The protection and promotion of human rights are enshrined in the Constitution of Azerbaijan. Since regaining its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan became a party to all major universal and regional human rights treaties, including seven core United Nations instruments that have established the monitoring mechanisms on their implementation. Azerbaijan has consistently fulfilled its reporting obligations under these treaties and has undertaken follow-up measures based on recommendations of the treaty bodies. Implementation of Azerbaijan's commitments under the human rights treaties, including of those set forth the UN Charter, and in the human rights documents and treaties adopted within the framework of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is of crucial importance. Azerbaijan has recognized the competence of all respective treaty bodies to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within its jurisdiction claiming to be victims of a violation.

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been closely cooperating with the Special Procedures mandate holders. It has extended invitations to various mandate holders on different issues and is expressing its readiness to further cooperate with them in the years to come.

At national level, measures to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms include the effective functioning since 2001 of the office of national human rights defender – Ombudsperson, the ongoing reforms of the judicial and penitentiary systems, regular amendments and revisions of the Election and Penal Codes in accordance with recommendations of the international organizations. Furthermore, the amendments made to the Constitution of Azerbaijan in 2002 granted citizens with the right to directly appeal to the Constitutional Court. Particular attention is being attached to freedom of information and functioning of free and independent mass media, and recent developments in this field include the initiative to establish a separate office of ombudsperson on mass media.

At the international level, in line with its overall support to the United Nations' activities in the field of human rights Azerbaijan fully supported the reform of the existing UN human rights machinery, in particular the strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and the replacement of the Commission on Human Rights with a stronger and more efficient Human Rights Council. Despite the grave humanitarian situation in the country, Azerbaijan is amongst those countries that contributed through financial support to strengthening of the activity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Azerbaijan views **the concept of dialogue** in a broad sense of the word, to comprise, *inter alia*, interaction with civil society and non-governmental organizations, Special Procedures as well as dialogue among civilizations, States with national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. In this regard, Azerbaijan also welcomes the decision that the Council should serve as a forum for a dialogue on thematic issues on all human rights.

Although Azerbaijan never had an opportunity to serve as a member of the Commission on Human Rights (with the exception of a very brief period of time this year when it became member and coordinator of the Eastern European Regional Group, including member of the CHR Expanded Bureau), it has actively contributed to the work of the Commission as an observer.

In particular, Azerbaijan initiated and was the main sponsor of the biennial **resolution on Missing Persons**, which was elaborated with the support of ICRC and has been adopted in both CHR and the General Assembly by consensus with considerable number of co-sponsors from all regions of the world.

In line with its **strong commitment to promotion of gender equality and advancement of women**, Azerbaijan as Member of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, successfully facilitated the consultations and adoption without a vote of the draft resolution entitled "Review of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" at its 2004 substantive session.

Azerbaijan is also actively engaged into the **activities aimed at fighting racism and racial discrimination**. It served as vice-chair at the Durban Conference held in South Africa, in 2001. Azerbaijan closely follows and contributes to the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

Both at national and international levels, Azerbaijan proceeds from **the interrelatedness, interdependence, indivisibility and mutual reinforcement of all human rights**, civil and political on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other, including the right to development. Azerbaijan believes that there cannot be the hierarchy amongst rights, and equal focus should be placed on all human rights.

With this understanding, Azerbaijan supports the mandate of **the Working Group on Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** and will further continue to contribute to the work of the Working Group and adjustment and prolongation of its mandate.

Azerbaijan attaches special importance to the mandate and work of **the Working Group on a draft legally binding normative instrument for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearances**, and further consideration of its report at the first session of the Human Rights Council in June 2006 is a matter of significance for Azerbaijan.

In its **future activities**, Azerbaijan has strong intention to continue to contribute to the United Nations' action in the field of promotion and protection of human rights. Azerbaijan stresses its commitment to actively participate in the work of the Human Rights Council in the spirit of dialogue and cooperation and to further support the strengthening of the UN human rights machinery, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

If elected, Azerbaijan would actively contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council proceeding from the necessity of realization of all human rights, including the right to development, as well as to strive for rationalizing the system of special procedures. Azerbaijan will continue to place special focus on promotion of gender equality and advancement of women, as well as on the rights of the child and other vulnerable groups.

At national level, Azerbaijan reiterates its readiness to continue its cooperation with special procedures mandate holders and treaty monitoring bodies and to employ measures in line with their recommendations and concluding observations.

Enclosure 1

Principal international instruments to which Azerbaijan is a party

Human rights law

1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966)
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
4. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
5. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973)
6. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
7. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
8. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
9. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (1989)
10. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)
11. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999)
12. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000)
13. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000)

Law of refugees and stateless persons

1. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)
2. Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954)
3. Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961)
4. Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (1967)

International humanitarian law

1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)
2. Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, August (1949)
3. Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (1949)
4. Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949)
5. Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949)
6. Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity (1968)

Enclosure 2

Azerbaijan: voluntary pledges and commitments on human rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

Actions to improve promotion and protection of human rights domestically

In line with the strong commitment to fully and effectively implement its obligations under international and regional treaties and other documents to which it is Party, at national level Azerbaijan pledges to:

- **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture;**

- **Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;**

- **Present its 2nd periodic report on implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities;**

- **Launch the State Program on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development** for 2006-2015 which will constitute long-term strategy for the achievement of MDGs and for the promotion of economic and social rights of all citizens;

- **Continue its close cooperation with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights,** in particular through the current technical cooperation project on "Strengthening of Capacities and Infrastructure for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Azerbaijan", as well as within new initiatives;

- **Maintain constructive dialogue and cooperation with all Special Procedures,** in particular with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of speech and opinion within the framework of his upcoming visit to Azerbaijan in 2006;

- **Continue its cooperation with treaty bodies,** in particular the Committee on the Rights of Child within the framework of the upcoming visit of the Chairperson of the CRC to Azerbaijan and by implementing the concluding observations of the Committee with regard to the recently presented 2nd periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of Child;

- **Explore new ways of cooperation with UNIFEM in the field of mainstreaming gender perspectives into national poverty reduction strategy** within the framework of the upcoming visit of the Executive Director to Azerbaijan in May 2006;

- Further enhance collaboration with relevant regional organizations, in particular the Council of Europe and OSCE with a view to ensuring full and efficient promotion and protection of human rights at national level, especially in the spheres of media and elections; take further steps towards improving current legislative framework in relevant fields.

Support and contribution to activities aimed at promotion and protection of human rights at international level

Azerbaijan has strong intention to continue to contribute to the United Nations' action in the field of promotion and protection of human rights by committing itself to:

- Take active part in the work of the Human Rights Council by promoting development of human rights norms by the Council and by contributing to new international cooperation programs and initiatives on human rights;

- Cooperate with all stakeholders to promote and protect human rights universally, *inter alia* through dialogue, exchange of expertise, technical cooperation and advice, proceeding from the indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights, civil and political, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights, on the other, including the right to development;

- Further contribute to broadening dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions;

- Strive for rationalizing and strengthening of the system of Special Procedures;

- Continue its contribution to the work of the Working Group on Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and strive for adjustment and prolongation of its mandate;

- Maintain its support and contribution to the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Aciton;

- Take active part in discussions on the reform of the UN treaty body system;

- Provide financial support to relevant bodies of the UN system, in particular those responsible for child protection, gender equality and protection of vulnerable groups, and strive for improved and effective coordination among UN human rights bodies.

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Note verbale dated 7 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat and, with reference to the former's note dated 31 March 2006 announcing the candidature of the Republic of Latvia to the Human Rights Council at its first elections to be held on 9 May 2006, has the honour to forward, enclosed herewith (see annex), information on the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of the Republic of Latvia in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251.

06-31700 (E) 280406

Annex to the note verbale dated 7 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Latvia: voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

The Government of the Republic of Latvia has decided to present its candidature for the first elections to the Human Rights Council to be held in May 9, 2006, during the 60th session of the UN General Assembly.

Since the restoration of its independence and democracy in 1991, human rights have been one of the priorities of Latvia. Latvia has ratified the key human rights treaties, has adopted the necessary legislation and policies, and strives to support the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world.

Following the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Latvia was one of the first countries in the region to establish a national human rights institution – the Latvian National Human Rights Office. On April 6, 2006 Latvian Parliament decided to expand the powers of the Office, to include also the functions of a traditional Ombudsperson institution.

In implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action of the 2001 Durban World Conference Latvia has adopted the National Programme for the Promotion of Tolerance.

The Integration Programme implemented by the Government is unprecedented in scale and serves as an example of successful consolidation of society.

As a member state of the Commission on Human Rights from 1999 to 2001 and through its active involvement in the ensuing years, Latvia has acquired valuable experience of work within the framework of the Commission and has contributed to the streamlining of the Commission's proceedings. During the 55th and 57th Sessions, Latvia was the coordinating country of the Eastern European Group and held the Vice-Presidency of the 55th Session. In 2005, the Commission on Human Rights unanimously adopted a resolution on the work of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights tabled by Latvia.

Latvia was one of the first countries to issue a standing invitation in 2001 to all Special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and has strongly supported the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Latvia is a State Party to all major human rights instruments and has made no reservations thereto:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979;

- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1987;
- Convention of the Rights of the Child of 1989;
- Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954;
- Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.

Latvia has cleared a backlog in submission of the National Reports on implementation of these instruments to the UN Treaty bodies and submits reports on regular basis and timely manner.

Latvia is unequivocally committed to strive for the highest human rights standards and freedoms. In case of election to the Council Latvia will continue to be actively involved in the dialogue in order to promote and protect human rights.

In case of election to the Human Rights Council, Latvia pledges to:

Internationally:

- Actively participate in the work of the Council for the promotion of universality and indivisibility of all human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural, including the right to development;

- Contribute to the establishment of the peer review mechanism and accept review by it;

- Contribute to strengthening the system of Special procedures and other expert mechanisms of the Council;

- Continue to contribute to the reform of the treaty monitoring body system and to give due follow-up to the UN human rights mechanisms' recommendations;

- Ensure continuous voluntary contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

- Cooperate with the OHCHR to provide experts for technical support to strengthen human rights capacity in States that require such support;

- Contribute to the strengthening of democracy, good governance, rule of law and respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms through regional cooperation – Council of Europe and OSCE – and promote the cooperation of the UN with regional human rights bodies;

- Share its positive experience with interested states on the development of institutions and policies promoting human rights and integration of societies;

Domestically:

- Consider further ratifications of human rights treaties avoiding reservations, and examine the possibility for accepting further individual communications' and inquiry procedures;

- Continue cooperation with the treaty monitoring bodies, including by submitting periodic reports on time. As no reports are due for 2006, Latvia undertakes to submit the report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination due in 2007 in a timely manner;

- Uphold the standing invitation to all Special procedures extended in 2001;

- Continue the implementation of the National Programme for the Promotion of Tolerance;

- Improve the protection of the rights of the child and women by implementing the recommendations of the relevant UN human rights mechanisms and special procedures;

- Take measures to eliminate trafficking in human beings by implementing the National Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings;

- Improve the protection and promotion of human rights by the recently strengthened Ombudsperson institution.